

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2022 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program**

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [X] Title I [ ] Charter [ ] Magnet [ ] Choice

Name of Principal Mr. Todd Jefferson  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Ridgeview Elementary School  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 3903 W Ridgeview Drive  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Peoria State IL Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 61615-8706

County Peoria

Telephone (309) 243-7717 Fax (309) 692-8357

Web site/URL https://www.dunlapcusd.net/ridgeview E-mail tjefferson@dunlapcusd.net

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Superintendent\* Dr. Scott Dearman E-mail sdearman@dunlapcusd.net  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Dunlap Community Unit School District 323 Tel. (309) 243-8700

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School Board President/Chairperson Dr. Abbie Humbles  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

*\*Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, leave blank.*

## **PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

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The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school’s eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2021 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2016 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 or 2021.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. The nominated school has, or is subject to, a nondiscrimination policy (provide either a link to the policy or submit a text of the policy), is committed to equal opportunity for all students and all staff consistent with applicable law and does not have any outstanding findings of unlawful discrimination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s nomination and/or rescind a school’s award if unlawful discrimination is later discovered.

12. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

**The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if one of these eligibility requirements is later discovered to have not been met or otherwise been violated.**

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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Data should be provided for the current school year (2021-2022) unless otherwise stated.

**DISTRICT** (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools. For charter schools: If a charter school is part of the public school system, information should be provided for the public school district. If a charter school is considered its own district or part of a charter district, the information provided should reflect that.)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 5 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 1 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 8 TOTAL

**SCHOOL** (To be completed by all schools. **Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not for the district.**)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

- Urban (city or town)
- Suburban
- Rural

3. Number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	34	31	65
1	33	35	68
2	44	30	74
3	36	24	60
4	41	38	79
5	39	45	84
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	227	203	430

\*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0.5 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 17 % Asian
  - 14.3 % Black or African American
  - 6 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0.2 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 53 % White
  - 9 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2020 - 2021 school year: 5%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain:

While our mobility is listed as 5%, the formula used only accounts for students moving in between October 1st and the end of the school year. We do tend to see many move ins and move outs during the summer months and during the first month and a half of the school year.

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	7
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	16
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	23
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	445
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.05
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	5

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):

American Sign Language, Arabic, Cherokee, French, Gujarati, Hindi, Ibo/Igbo, Italian, Japanese, Kannada/Kanarese, Korean, Mandarin, Marathi, Oriya/Odia, Portuguese, Sinhalese, Spanish, Swahili, Swedish, Tagalog, Tamil, Telegu, Turkish, Urdu, Vietnamese

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 10 %  
41 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 24 %

Total number students who qualify: 102

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504: 17 %  
75 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. All students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504 should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>4</u> Autism                  | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>1</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>14</u> Other Health Impaired                |
| <u>11</u> Developmental Delay    | <u>18</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>19</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>2</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 10
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	19
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	8
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	14
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	6

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 23:1

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

<b>Required Information</b>	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017
Daily student attendance	97%	96%	96%	96%	95%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2021.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes  No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school’s mission or vision statement.

The Ridgeview School Community empowers all students to reach their individual potential. Our vision statements are students will develop into passionate, voracious lifelong authors and readers. Students will develop into fluent mathematicians who apply critical thinking skills to solve problems. The Ridgeview Community will create a positive, supportive, and safe school environment that supports growth in all areas of social-emotional learning. Students will be exposed to a rich array of fine arts programming that expands their mind, body, and creativity.

16. Provide a URL link to or text of the school’s nondiscrimination policy.

[https://boardpolicyonline.com/?b=dunlap\\_cusd\\_323&s=614896](https://boardpolicyonline.com/?b=dunlap_cusd_323&s=614896)

[https://boardpolicyonline.com/?b=dunlap\\_cusd\\_323&s=614980](https://boardpolicyonline.com/?b=dunlap_cusd_323&s=614980)

17. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

## **PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW**

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Ridgeview Elementary School is one of five elementary schools in Dunlap C.U.S.D. 323. We are nestled on the northwest edge of Peoria, which means the vast majority of our students have Peoria addresses. The makeup of the district is unique in that our high school, both middle schools, and one grade school all lie within the village of Dunlap which has a population of roughly 1,400 residents. The remaining four elementary schools are scattered throughout northwest Peoria to accommodate the growth of our school district. The district's 4,600 students come from a wide range of backgrounds, including the rural area surrounding the village of Dunlap and the myriad of residential neighborhoods in northwest Peoria. In fact, approximately 80% of students have a Peoria address.

Ridgeview, in particular, is the most diverse school in the district in both racial and ethnic backgrounds with socioeconomic circumstances. Ridgeview has over 25 languages represented in our student population. Many of those come from overseas with a varied linguistic background and have parents who are employed by Caterpillar. In addition to our cultural diversity, we have the highest percentage of students who qualify for free or reduced lunches. The percent of free and reduced lunches ranges between twenty-five and thirty percent, tripling the district average. For this reason, Ridgeview qualifies as a whole school Title I school. Ridgeview students have the opportunity to interact with a wide variety of cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds to enrich their overall educational experience.

To showcase our diverse cultural background, our PTO hosts a yearly International Fair. Our International Fair takes place in the evening and includes approximately 20 different booths that are set up around our Commons areas. These booths are sponsored and created by Ridgeview families who want to showcase their cultural backgrounds. The evening is set up as a tour around the world. Students receive a passport upon entry and their passports are stamped as they visit each of the stations around the Commons. Stations include informational displays, artifacts, and food. At the conclusion of the evening, some students perform cultural dances or music for all participants.

One of our strongest foundational elements of our school is our school mantra of "you belong, you matter, and you are worthy." This is communicated daily through morning announcements and intersects nearly every aspect of our school community. We have a mural of a Ridgeview Family Tree in our Commons where these words can be seen etched into the bark of the tree. This tree also contains the names of each child and staff member in our school on individual leaves attached to the tree. We take great pride in being what we call an "our kids" school. This means every adult takes ownership of every child in our school and this mindset has created a highly collaborative school community.

The basis of our school mantra was born through our seven-year partnership with B.I.S.T. (Behavior Intervention Support Team) out of Kansas City, Missouri. The B.I.S.T. philosophy has united our school in a common mindset of how we view and respond to problematic student behavior. The philosophy is grounded in grace and accountability. Grace forms a basis of meeting each student where they are and providing them with what they need, rather than what they may deserve. It also promotes the belief that behaviors are skills that need to be taught much in the same way we teach academic skills. Accountability provides a framework of how we build trusting relationships with students to allow for partnership to occur. Students trust adults to care enough about them to hold them accountable for their choices and make behavioral changes.

Lastly, our school culture shined brightest in the midst of the tremendous challenge of navigating school through the COVID-19 pandemic. While many schools chose to operate in full remote mode, we decided to keep school open and provide options for all students to attend school either in person or remotely. The transformation that our teachers embraced was nothing short of remarkable. In our school hallways, a person could walk past a third grade classroom and see a full classroom of in-person learners and then see an empty classroom next door where the teacher was teaching her remote class virtually through Google Meets. We endured COVID mitigations, frequent quarantines, students moving back and forth between remote and in-person learning, fear and concern over personal health, and the challenge of completely transforming how we teach. While all schools faced these challenging circumstances, the way our staff overcame and

persevered through this while keeping our doors open showed their courage and passion for serving all children.

## **PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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### **1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.**

#### **1a. Overall approach, which may include overarching philosophy or approaches common across subject areas:**

The vision of developing passionate and voracious, lifelong readers and authors form the foundation of our literacy instruction. Our math instruction revolves around the vision of developing fluent mathematicians who apply critical thinking to solve problems. Our reading and math instruction is differentiated through guided math and reading structures which allows for both differentiated, independent center activities and targeted small group instruction.

In addition, we adhere to Continuous Improvement practices that facilitate student ownership of their learning. These practices include students tracking their own progress toward individual goals in data binders, student involvement in the development of classroom norms, and student-led conferences that take place each fall. This allows teachers to act as facilitators in the classroom.

We follow the Danielson Framework for teacher evaluation in our district. The four domains contained within this framework set a foundation for our work as professionals. There are clear guidelines on what constitutes excellence in each of the categories within the framework which helps to create consistent expectations for teachers in their work. The framework provides a structure that guides us in how we plan and prepare for instruction, how we set instructional outcomes for our lessons, how we design assessments, and ultimately how we deliver instruction. The framework also guides us in how we conduct ourselves as professionals in our work with students, parents, and one another.

Our school mantra of “you belong, you matter, and you are worthy” is integrated into how we teach students. Meeting students where they are and providing targeted instruction and intervention follows a growth mindset that our staff embraces. Each child at Ridgeview is deserving of success. Setting high expectations and providing them with appropriate support to meet these expectations helps ensure that we are meeting both the academic and social-emotional needs of our students. Our mission every year is to work as an “our kids” school where all adults take ownership of all students in our school.

#### **1b. Reading/English language arts curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:**

ELA learning standards are addressed during the core ELA curriculum block in each grade level. Grade level teams plan whole group reading lessons during professional learning community time. The reading lessons are planned by standard. Each reading standard is taught in a variety of ways. Reading standards are taught by having students demonstrate speaking and listening skills, asking and answering comprehension questions, writing, and foundational skills. In 3rd-5th grades, the teachers use Storyworks for their core curriculum. Storyworks is a valuable resource because it aligns with the common core standards and allows students to target specific standards. K-2 utilizes the Fountas and Pinnell reading curriculum. Fountas and Pinnell reading curriculum is used to teach whole group lessons and small group lessons. Teachers choose the lessons by standard. For example, in 2nd grade, teachers pull lessons from Fountas and Pinnell to teach author’s purpose. Lessons for the author’s purpose are taught to the whole class and then also revisited during small group differentiated instruction.

Each grade level has differentiated reading groups for each student’s reading ability. During differentiated reading groups, teachers teach a small group of students with similar reading abilities. During this time teachers instruct the reading foundational skills. Reading foundational skills include phonics patterns based on the student’s level. While teachers are providing small group instruction, other students are working on standards-based activities independently to reinforce the skills that have been taught in whole group lessons. All reading foundational skills are being practiced during small group work time.

Common assessments are administered by each grade level to assess reading standards. These common

assessments are administered quarterly. Each quarter, new reading standards are taught according to the district scope and sequence. These data are used to determine a student's success for quarterly report cards. For example, in second grade for the first quarter, we assess two standards, CC.RL.2.2: I can determine the central message, lesson, or moral, and CC.RI.2.2: I can identify the main topic of a text. These two standards are taught in whole group and small group during quarter one. Then we give a summative assessment to measure the standards. The success criteria is a guiding tool that allows teachers to monitor where a student should be when figuring quarterly grades. The student success criteria has been a useful tool that allows all teachers across the district to stay consistent when giving quarterly grades.

Adaptations to the curriculum were made during the 2020-2021 school year to meet the needs of online learners. Each grade level had a remote class. These remote teachers had to create online resources to provide standards-based instruction. During the 2021-2022 school year, all students were back to in-person learning. However, teachers had to adapt and deliver remote instruction for quarantined learners. Teachers have used Google Meets to record lessons to provide the same lessons to remote learners. Teachers have used Canvas to ensure that they had access to the same materials as in-person learners.

### **1c. Mathematics curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:**

Math learning standards are addressed during the core math curriculum block in each grade level. Planning for each of these lessons is based on the standards in our district's scope and sequence. Every grade level meets in professional learning communities to plan for instruction. Each math standard is taught in a variety of ways. Whole group instruction, centers, small group, and individual reteach are incorporated in every grade level. Students are assessed with quick checks, class work, observation, common formative assessments as well as summative assessments. Pre-testing is also done in order to scaffold instruction for students who need enrichment. Technology based instruction is utilized daily through our online platforms such as Freckle, Common Core Sheets, IXL, Xtra Math, Happy Numbers, Touch Math, and Fast Math. These programs help differentiate instruction for a variety of student learning levels.

Each grade level has a representative to our district's Curriculum Council where common formative assessments have been developed to evaluate learning standards. Representatives meet with their grade level teams during professional learning communities to share what was created during the Curriculum Council to plan for instruction and assessment for each standard. Each grade level utilizes the school's data wall to determine which students need small group or individual instruction to meet standards. There are several points on the data wall that help drive instruction, planning, and assessment. Examples of points on the data wall include STAR math, IAR Math, and evidence collected throughout the year on specific standards. Learning is also supplemented with STEM activities, problem based learning, and well as collaboration with their peers.

Adaptations to the curriculum were made during the 2020-2021 school year to meet the needs of online learners. Each grade level had a remote class. These remote teachers had to create online resources to deliver instruction to provide standards based instruction. During the 2021-2022 school year, all students were back to in-person learning. However, teachers had to adapt and deliver remote instruction for quarantined learners. Teachers have used Google Meets to record lessons to provide the same lessons to remote learners. Teachers have used Canvas to ensure that they had access to the same materials as in person learners. This year has been unique in that we have not had a remote class in each grade level. Classroom teachers have had to not only present information in person, but also plan for instruction for students who opted for remote learning due to medical reasons, as well as students who have had to be quarantined. Teachers have been live streaming lessons and instruction for those students, in addition to having Googlemeets for supplemental instruction as needed.

### **1d. Science curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:**

Our district focuses on essential questions as each grade level follows our district's scope and sequence. Next Generation Science Standards are used to plan for instruction. Each of those standards are presented with multifaceted lessons and experiments. Resources that are used include Foss science kits for hands-on activities, Mystery Science, virtual experiments, and tutorials. Where applicable, science ties in with our  
NBRS 2022

reading instruction, especially in small groups. Ridgeview's Outdoor Classroom is also used to enhance student engagement with the following units: Living Systems, Life Structure, Water and Climate, observing and measuring plants' growth, and observations of the butterfly life cycle.

Each grade level has field trips that reinforce topics that we are learning about in class. Those field trips include, but are not limited to The Hult Center for Healthy Living, The Challenger Learning Center, Wildlife Prairie Park, The Riverfront Museum, The Reindeer Farm, The Planetarium, and The Glen Oak Zoo.

Engineering is also addressed in a variety of ways. Students build and launch rockets. They create and test cars using what they have learned about physics and laws of motion concepts. They do experiments using ramps and create marble mazes. Students are assessed using classroom observations, classwork, common formative and summative assessments. Virtual investigations have been a crucial part of incorporating technology with science, as they give all students the opportunity to experience hands-on lessons even if they are learning remotely. Lessons this year have a combination in class experiments and technology that have provided a rich foundation on which to build. Students have a greater understanding of our learning objectives due to this.

#### **1e. Social studies/history/civic learning curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:**

Each grade level follows a scaffolded scope and sequence which is based around Big Ideas and Essential Questions. Resources for this include a textbook, Freckle interactive online, as well as other online components that have been compiled to help immerse and engage students in the world around them. Where available, our teachers strive to include social studies in our Reading/ELA Curriculum through the use of texts and projects including units on the diverse cultures of our students where items and ideas can be brought in and shared. We have completed student-centered GVC (guaranteed and viable curriculum) work for our social studies standards, which allows students to see and understand the learning targets, as well as the success criteria for reaching them.

In addition, teacher's help to create a deeper understanding of history through the use of unit projects adapted over the course of the last few years to be more equitable and inclusive for our diverse population of students. For example, our second grade teachers do a unit on Trail Blazers, which features important historical figures and their impact on the world. Our fourth grade teachers have students research influential people from history for a wax museum presentation that is shared with the school.

We also place a large emphasis on civic learning and engagement. Junior Achievement is a program where business owners come in to share with students about the importance of their jobs, the economy, and of civic responsibility. In assessing students, each grade level uses common assessments so that gaps in the learning can be addressed and changes to the implementation of the curriculum can be made cohesively.

Finally, our students get to take information they have learned out into the world through field trips to The Lincoln Museum and assemblies with prominent figures in the community such as Sheila Arnold and her History's Alive! program. Social studies at Ridgeview Elementary is taught to engage all learners in the world around them while aligning to the state standards.

#### **1f. For secondary schools:**

#### **1g. For schools that offer preschool for three- and/or four-year old students:**

### **2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

Ridgeview engages its students in a wide variety of non-core curricular learning experiences every day. Students participate in physical education (PE) for 25 minutes each day. PE provides students with access to an active and healthy lifestyle through a variety of activities. It also allows students to learn collaboration and sportsmanship by participating in team sports and games. As a part of physical education, students participate in Jump Rope for Heart to raise money and awareness for the American Heart Association and a generally healthy lifestyle. Students also engage in competition and teamwork during Field Day in the spring. Ridgeview provides physical fitness testing to students in the fall and spring.

Students at Ridgeview participate in music classes for 50 minutes each week. In music, students are introduced to a variety of instruments depending on their grade level. Students use the digital platform Quaver to access content related to elementary standards such as reading music. All students in grades K-5 participate in a musical performance in the spring. Students in 4th grade learn to play recorders. Students in 4th and 5th grades have an opportunity to participate in orchestra. Students may choose any instrument to play. They meet in small groups throughout the year for instruction and practice, and there is a district-wide orchestra performance in the spring. Students in 5th grade have the opportunity to join band. Those students also meet in small groups throughout the year and participate in a district-wide concert in the spring. The 5th grade band program is an excellent preparation for participation in middle school band.

Ridgeview students receive an introduction to the Spanish language through the district's World Language program. All K-5 students receive 50 minutes of instruction each week. Students at the primary grades are introduced to simple vocabulary words (greetings, body parts, colors, numbers, letters, furniture, etc.) and begin to learn how to speak in complete Spanish sentences. Each year, the material advances and older students become more familiar with academic vocabulary and conversational language. Students are also presented with the traditions and cultures of Spanish-speaking nations.

Students at Ridgeview participate in Art for 50 minutes each week. All students are introduced to multiple techniques and media including pencil, crayon, oil pastel, charcoal, paper sculpture, cardboard sculpture, relief printing, watercolor painting, both functional and non-functional ceramics, textiles, and screen printing. Student artistic projects are on display around the building throughout the school year.

Ridgeview also values the importance of social and emotional learning for students. Students in grades K-2 use the digital platform, QuaverSEL, where they are exposed to foundational skills of empathy and relationship building with adults and peers. They enjoy music and role-playing activities as a way of learning these skills. K-5 students use the digital platform of CharacterStrong. The students learn about 10 personal traits such as empathy, responsibility, and honesty through quotes, videos, games and conversation to build social and emotional strength. Lessons and activities on both digital platforms align to CASEL standards.

### **3. Academic Supports**

#### **3a. Students performing below grade level:**

Ridgeview students performing below grade level have a plethora of resources and support provided to them to promote growth in content areas. Our response to intervention structure differentiates the kinds of support needed based on the individual performances of the students. We follow a protocol to support students that are falling behind in academics and/or socially using a team approach. In professional learning communities, general education teachers, special education teachers, interventionists and the school counselor collaborate to develop plans for success or determine the appropriate interventions needed for student success. Some of the interventions that are used to support Ridgeview students are Foundations, Leveled Literacy Intervention, Lexia, Sonday, Heggerty Phonemic Awareness, Read Live, Happy Numbers, Touch Math, Fastt math, and Freckle. While in Tier II, general education teachers collaborate with Title staff during PLC's to determine the best intervention and scheduled time for consistent instruction.

To review student progress at the Tier III level, Ridgeview utilizes data days and regularly scheduled meetings every 6-8 weeks with parents, the school psychologist and the school social worker. Regular communication between teachers and families is integral to the success of helping our low performing

students. Once a school year, these conferences are student-led, which encourages student ownership of achievement. Collaboration between parents and the school include opportunities to attend evening events on topics including curriculum, culture and behavior interventions.

Beyond response to intervention, Ridgeview has an afternoon tutoring program and summer school for students who fall below the 25th percentile in reading or math. Transportation is provided for students who need it. After school tutoring is facilitated by certified teachers. The children are also provided snacks in both tutoring and summer school. Teachers of summer school and after school tutors utilize the same curriculum that the general education teachers use to provide re-teach of core content.

### **3b. Students performing above grade level:**

We meet the needs of students who are working above grade level in a multitude of ways. One way is by offering students enrichment opportunities through our Enrichment Eagles program. We use a variety of assessments to identify students who qualify for this level of enrichment. We use CogAT assessment, STAR benchmark assessments, and teacher recommendations to determine who qualifies. The top 9-12% of students at each grade level qualify for Enrichment Eagles. Enrichment Eagles is an after school program that meets weekly on Tuesdays to engage students in a multitude of enrichment activities ranging from robotics to coding.

We also have procedures in place to consider students for either grade level or subject acceleration. Assessments are utilized to accurately identify students who may need this level of advanced challenge. Our school psychologist is involved in providing further assessments to determine the readiness of a student who may be considered for grade or subject acceleration. These acceleration options are considered for those students who are performing well above their peers in relation to the data gathered through the Enrichment Eagles process.

We also have a designated time in our master schedule for WIN time (What I Need). This time is utilized for small group instruction, intervention, and enrichment. We also use this time to support students with IEP's or who need ESL services. In addition, our instructional protocols in reading and math support a differentiated approach to meeting the needs of students working above grade level. Teachers use pre-tests frequently at the beginning of math units to help guide their instruction. In addition to the instructional guidance these pre-assessments provide, it also allows for students to work on unit objectives in a different manner than the rest of the class. These alternative activities allow students to work at a high and deeper level that provides opportunities to apply their knowledge.

### **3c. Special education:**

To promote the least restrictive environment, students in kindergarten through second grade who have developmental disabilities are provided full inclusion instruction in a general education classroom. Our special education teachers are highly qualified with masters degrees, Orton Gillingham Training, National Board Certification and CPI Training. They support the general education teacher by providing accommodations and training. Students receive scientifically based interventions both within the classroom and in a smaller group setting. Collaboration between parent, general education teacher and special education teacher is done annually at a minimum. Special education teachers also co-teach with general education teachers for reading and math instruction.

An instructional program was developed for students who are at least three grade levels below their age level peers. In this classroom, the teacher-to-student ratio is smaller so that students are provided additional targeted instruction to close learning gaps.

General education is adapted in a multitude of ways. Students who struggle physically to keep up in a general physical education class are provided adapted physical education. There is a smaller teacher-to-student ratio. These special education students are still part of the general education program, but have activities modified by a highly qualified physical education teacher. Ridgeview Elementary is currently pursuing Special Olympic certification.

All students at Ridgeview have the opportunity to use two sensory paths located on opposite ends of the building. An occupational therapy room is also available for students needing sensory breaks and a location to self-regulate. Special transportation is provided for students who need an alternate transportation method. Students are provided door-to-door service.

The Ridgeview school motto is “You belong, you matter and you are worthy.” This shared philosophy is extended to all our students and staff, which provides an inclusive community. All the students at Ridgeview are “our” students based on this philosophy of belonging.

### **3d. English Language Learners, if a special program or intervention is offered:**

We have a wide range of student linguistic backgrounds at Ridgeview. Over 25 different language backgrounds are represented within our student population. To showcase this diverse component of our school, we have flags hanging from the rafters of our commons area that represent the different countries our students come from.

Ridgeview employs a full-time ESL teacher. This teacher works to design lessons that are targeted toward specific language needs in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students are pulled out in small groups that are created according to their language acquisition needs. Our ESL teacher works closely with classroom teachers to align her support with classroom instructional goals and to ensure that appropriate accommodations and modifications are being provided in the classroom. When additional materials, resources, or supports are needed in the general education classroom, our ESL teacher works closely with that teacher to provide the tools needed to ensure students are successful.

The ESL teacher uses classroom-based assessments, benchmark assessments, and standardized ESL assessments to plan targeted instruction. Proficiency levels of ESL students are communicated to the general education teachers to support appropriate differentiated literacy strategies. Classroom teachers work closely with the ESL teacher to monitor student progress and performance in the classroom and the ESL teacher partners with classroom teachers to ensure progress is reported regularly with parents at least quarterly throughout the year. The ESL teacher also collaborates with community agencies to provide translation services for parents who need them for parent-teacher conferences and other meetings with school staff.

### **3e. Other populations (e.g., migrant, homeless), if a special program or intervention is offered:**

While Ridgeview does not offer any specific programming for unique or diverse populations, the school and district have a multitude of resources to address the needs of all students and their families. Peoria Rescue Ministries houses the Esther House, a homeless shelter for women and their children, in the Ridgeview attendance area. The Esther House offers emergency relief services to women and their dependent children. Spiritual, emotional, and physical care are given to women and their children in a clean and comfortable environment. Ridgeview and the Dunlap School District Transportation department work with the Esther House to make sure students who are housed there receive safe and dependable transportation to school each day. The Ridgeview staff has gone to the Esther House to help families with registration and communication when it comes to the education of the children living there.

The Dunlap School District provides resources and materials to Ridgeview students in need through the Dunlap Gives Back program. Founded in 2015, the program began accepting donations of food, clothing, school supplies, and hygiene products to provide for students and families in need. Since then, the list of donations has grown substantially and Dunlap Gives Back has been able to provide families at Ridgeview furniture and financial assistance in times of severe need or tragedy. While striving to provide living essentials and school supplies, the program works hard to protect families’ privacy and maintain confidentiality.

Ridgeview also works hard to meet the needs of migrant and English Language Learner families. Outside of the ELL program the district offers, Ridgeview staff have worked hard to provide translators and resources

for non-English speaking families in regards to school communication, parent conferences, and community resources. This spring, the Dunlap School District will be hosting a medical informational fair and COVID-19 vaccine drive for the families of ELL students.

## **PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE**

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### **1. Engaging Students:**

There are a variety of exciting events that students engage in throughout the school year as well as activities that are woven throughout their regular schedules. For example, students receive a variety of special classes each week including Spanish, music, art, daily physical education, library, orchestra for fourth and fifth graders, and band for fifth. These special classes allow students to express themselves and excel in creative ways. Technology provides another avenue for student engagement and teachers work hard to incorporate technology throughout daily lessons. Ridgeview has a 1:1 computer program, which allows teachers to differentiate and provides an opportunity for students to apply their learning in various ways. Fourth and fifth graders are also allowed to take their computers home with them each night.

Ridgeview is a place where learning meets fun. There are numerous community building activities throughout the school year. Every year, we have spirit days, fun runs, field trips, school wide challenges and contests, and PTO events. As an “Our Kids” school, we believe it is essential to build student relationships. We nurture that through Fox Families and kids coaching kids. Fox Families team up a grade 3-5 class with a K-2 class in order to both promote relationships and offer mentoring opportunities. Older students take great pride in helping younger students complete activities such as reading, writing, or other fun hands-on games and crafts. Fox Family gatherings are highly anticipated and motivational for all students at Ridgeview. Older students who have struggled in the past with certain behavior skills are able to coach younger students who are dealing with a similar missing behavior skill. At Ridgeview we believe that behavior is to be looked at as a missing skill and not as an indicator of who the child is. Students learn to view themselves and others as capable of growth.

Recently, Ridgeview celebrated its 20th year anniversary. To mark that occasion, our community revamped an outdoor space into an outdoor education center. Teachers and parents collaborated to determine what the space would include. Students were then given the opportunity to name areas and participate in the creation of the outdoor classroom. Students have gathered for Fox Families, to paint the planter boxes, to celebrate different holidays, and to learn in a different environment. Some fifth grade students have shown initiative to research and plan a compost project for the gardens.

### **2. Engaging Families and Community:**

Ridgeview uses a multitude of volunteers and resources to engage the students with families and the community. Our PTO has a significant influence on the students’ learning success. The PTO meets monthly and works hard to not only provide funding and resources to support students and staff in a curricular sense, but it also provides opportunities for families to connect in fun community events. The PTO organizes a Trunk-Or-Treat at Halloween, family movie night, spirit days and the school carnival. It is strategic in planning fundraising opportunities that are fun and engaging for students and families to participate. Fundraisers include a costume “fun run” at Halloween, Scholastic and Barnes and Noble book fairs, trivia nights and auctions.

Ridgeview provides several opportunities for families and community members to engage in curricular activities with students as well. We have informational events where families can come in to learn about grade level curriculum and behavior expectations. We have hosted the Behavior Intervention Support Team (BIST) parent nights where families can learn about student behavior philosophy and we provide strategies to help support students with grace and accountability at home. Parent conferences are held at the end of the first quarter and teachers provide updates and classroom activities through weekly newsletters and ClassDojo messages. Parents are also able to volunteer as reading buddies and library helpers.

Ridgeview partners with several local agencies to connect students with resources around the community. The Peoria Fire Department has come to present about their role in the community and to raise student awareness of fire safety for kindergarteners. Ridgeview works with Junior Achievement which allows community members to speak with students about career interests and opportunities. The Peoria County

Farm Bureau does monthly Ag in the Classroom presentations to engage 5th grade students in agriculture. Ridgeview also operates a group Facebook page as a means to communicate about news and upcoming events. The page also posts about student learning experiences, fun day-to-day activities, and community events like school music performances.

Finally, Ridgeview has partnered with parents, high school Key Club students, and local businesses to build the Ridgeview Outdoor Education Center. Teachers were surveyed about what elements they would like to have in the learning space. Families and community volunteers have been working since Spring 2020 to create the learning center. When finished the space will have 3 “classrooms,” an art space, a music space, and a raised garden space for each grade level K-5. Ridgeview will also pursue having the space be a certified Outdoor Classroom.

### **3. Creating Professional Culture:**

Every week, teachers and staff at Ridgeview are reminded of our school norms. The principal posts these norms in our weekly newsletter. The norms are the following: We are here for students. We are essential to the lives of our students. Assume the best in each other. Communication involves listening. We are professionals. Trust colleagues and administration. Allow yourself to be vulnerable and take risks. These norms ensure that the staff is a cohesive unit with shared values.

New teachers to Ridgeview are part of a mentoring program where they are assigned a mentor who can observe and support their professional growth. These mentors work with instructional coaches to improve the teaching and learning at Ridgeview. This is an example of how supportive the environment is for new teachers.

District wide learning opportunities are available to all Ridgeview teachers. Some examples of these learning opportunities are book studies, outside experts, in-house technology instruction by instructional technology coaches, math cadre, and administrative mentoring. Continuing education is supported at Ridgeview through financial reimbursement, cohorts and continuous opportunities to complete coursework in a practical environment through field experiences. Moreover, Ridgeview teachers participate in weekly instructional rounds where they can learn from fellow teachers or open their classrooms up for other teachers to observe. Also, there are extensive offerings of professional development during the summer for teachers to take advantage of in order to grow professionally.

Due to the COVID outbreak across the nation, Ridgeview parents were given the option to choose remote or in-person instruction for their children. During the pandemic, Ridgeview had devoted remote instruction teachers in each grade. These teachers served on a committee that met monthly to support one another and collaborate with administration on ideas to keep remote Ridgeview students connected to the school community. Remote teachers served as leaders on their grade level teams to help in-person teachers connect and continue teaching to quarantined students. Time was allotted to prepare for remote instruction throughout the school year.

Through the BIST philosophy, teachers use common language when addressing students. This is helpful amongst staff because it creates cohesion by having similar expectations and responses. This is an example of how the Ridgeview staff comes together to support “our” students. Ongoing BIST training has helped facilitate this approach and created a calmer and positive environment for everyone at Ridgeview.

### **4. School Leadership:**

Ridgeview employs a full-time principal and a half-time assistant principal. The principal of the school has served as principal of the school for the past 10 years and has been employed in the school district for the past 26 years. There have been four different assistant principals that have served Ridgeview over the past six years since the part-time position was created. Ridgeview will be adding two ED/BD classrooms next year and has hired a full-time assistant principal for the first time beginning the fall of 2022.

The administration at Ridgeview believes that shared leadership is key to running an efficient and successful

learning community. There are many opportunities that allow teachers to have voices when it comes to decision making. Some examples of these opportunities are the instructional leadership team, BIST Vision Team, Curriculum Council, Equity Committee and the Dunlap Education Association. These teams meet regularly with administration to create, develop and direct the continuous improvement of academic achievement. They also support the social emotional learning of our Ridgeview students.

The principal is a part of the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), which meets monthly. This allows for parent input and connection between the school and its stakeholders. Working together ensures that a bridge is built between Ridgeview families and the school. The relationships created between administration and parents ensure that students and teachers are supported in multiple ways.

The principal understands the significance of establishing positive partnerships with families and works closely with the PTO to plan family events throughout the year that encourage families to visit the school in ways that extend beyond fundraising. The principal has led school-wide events such as a “Bags with Dads” night, parent trivia nights, and other online family game nights. During the pandemic specifically, the principal began creating weekly video messages for parents and students in an effort to maintain connection during remote learning.

The Ridgeview administrator is data driven, ensuring that a global perspective is taken when determining student needs. The principal has created a grade level data wall for each grade level which is designed to track student performance across both social-emotional and academic areas. The data wall is used from a formative perspective to assess instructional practices but, more importantly, it helps teachers identify students who need support through a more holistic lens.

## **5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:**

Ridgeview serves one of the most diverse populations among the Dunlap elementary schools. In response to the diversity present in our school, we created an Equity and Diversity committee. This team is dedicated to culturally responsive teaching and learning which meets monthly to discuss ways to create an inclusive culture for all. In the 2021-2022 school year, the Equity and Diversity committee led a book study on Culturally Responsive Teaching in the Brain and shared different professional development activities for staff to reflect upon their own culture and their teaching practices.

Since the creation of this committee, staff reevaluated current yearly projects to ensure equity and cultural responsiveness amongst students who are represented in our classrooms. For example, Fourth Grade has replaced a President Wax Museum project to include Influential People, so that diverse students are able to see themselves in the people they study. Second Grade has added, “Trail Blazers,” to their Pioneers Unit to include diverse people from all walks of life and various disciplines. Our school counselor and Spanish teacher create displays and lessons focusing on influential people from diverse backgrounds. Students have openly expressed their excitement for these opportunities to learn about all of the amazing individuals that have shaped history. Our ESL teacher works closely with teachers to recognize and celebrate different holidays that occur throughout the year. Students are immensely grateful to have a time to share about their traditions with their peers.

As part of the book study and supplemental resources, staff have begun regular implementation of Restorative Circles. These new practices show students that teachers value their individual backgrounds and want to support their culture and social differences. We have also placed an importance on diverse books. We recognize that diverse books are not only a way for students to see themselves, but as a way for students to see others. Books are a wonderful tool to teach empathy and allow readers to learn about people who are different or have different experiences from themselves. Teachers were given resources and funds to find age appropriate books that incorporated many a variety of cultural backgrounds that are usually underrepresented in children’s literature. Students are able to see themselves in lessons, diverse books, and new signs that are written in our most prominent languages. Ridgeview also hosts guest speakers that are brought in to share forms of storytelling related to different cultures and backgrounds.

## **PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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Everything we do at Ridgeview falls under the umbrella of being an "our kids" school. The one thing that has shaped this mindset has been our partnership with BIST (Behavior Intervention Support Team). BIST is part of the Cornerstones of Care organization based out of Kansas City, Missouri and we have partnered with them for the past seven years. BIST has helped us transform our school culture by reshaping how we view problematic student behavior.

Our teachers lead with grace and accountability by understanding that problematic behaviors are missing skills that need to be taught. The pillar of grace helps us give students what they need in terms of protection, rather than punishment. Grace also focuses on building positive, trusting partnerships with students that lay the foundation of trust with students. The pillar of accountability helps us provide contributions, restrictions, and protective plans necessary to help students change behaviors.

BIST also has provided our staff with common language and procedures for managing student behavior. This language is intentional in helping students identify the emotions underneath their behavior and the life goals that need to be learned to change the behavior. The three common life goals we use at Ridgeview are, 1) being able to make good decisions even when we are mad, 2) being able to be okay even when others around us are not okay, and 3) being able to do something even if it is hard or even if we don't want to. These life goals provide the fabric from which all classrooms operate.

We have built upon our BIST foundation each year through regular consultations with BIST trainers. Basic introductory training is offered yearly for staff along with quarterly building-level consultations that allow for teachers to brainstorm solutions with consultants. This year we have been more intentional about incorporating classroom restorative circles to strengthen our classroom communities, provide a voice for students, and increase student accountability to their classroom community. In addition to the ongoing support, administrators have attended BIST conferences specifically geared towards building leaders and our BIST Vision Team has attended collaborative seminars to learn from other schools who use BIST.

BIST, which is grounded in trauma-informed practices, has become what we do and who we are. It seeps into every classroom lesson, every transition within our school, and every conversation we have regarding student behavior. We are a better school today because of our partnership with BIST.